GRANDFATHER FROG STAYS IN THE SMILING POOL

by

THORNTON W. BURGESS

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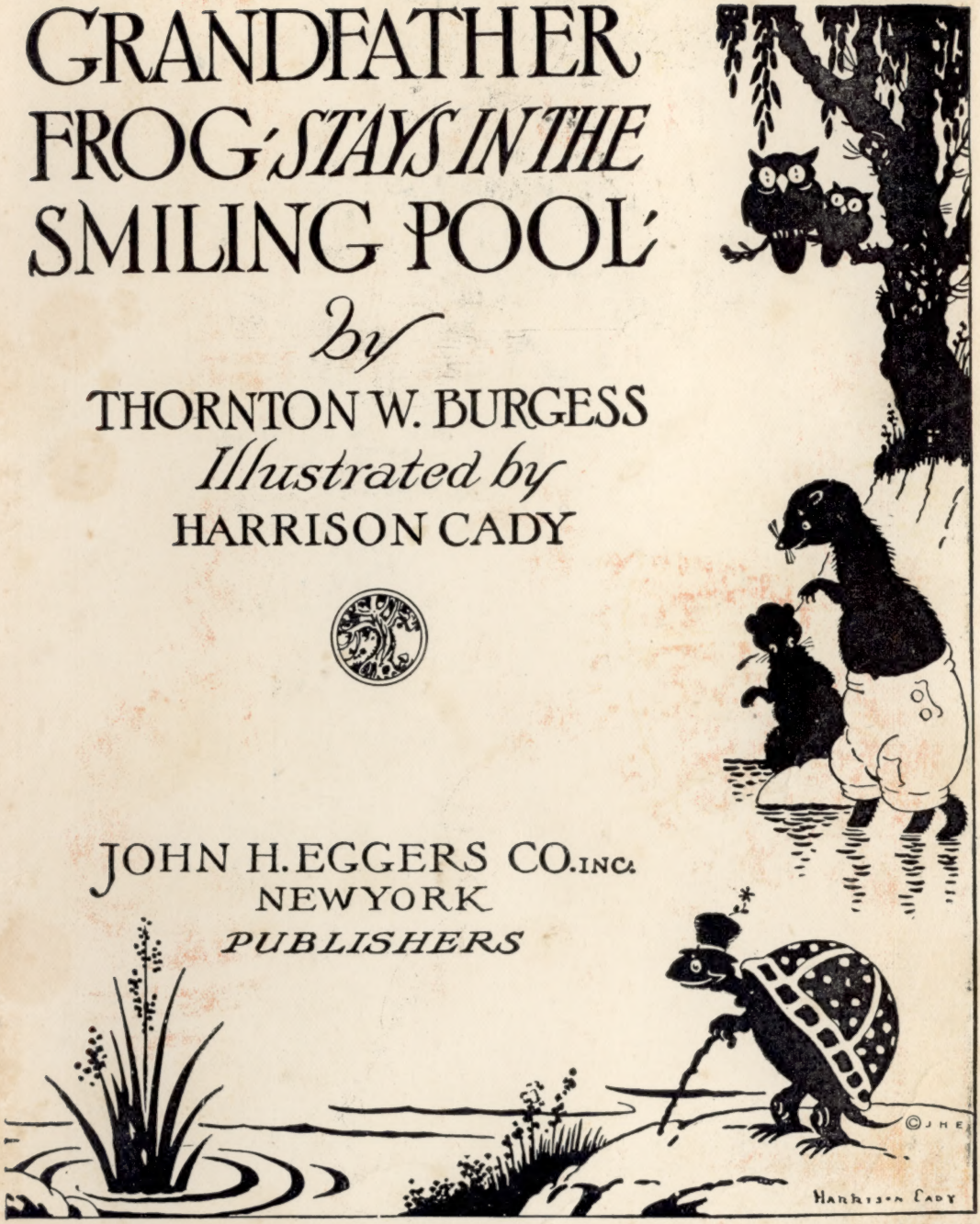

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"What I want to know is, where has Paddy the Beaver been all summer?" said Billy Mink. "Nobody seems to have seen him. I went up to his old dam three times, but there wasn't any pond up there then, and I didn't see anything of him around."

"He said that he had found a splendid hole in the bank that time when he came down the Laughing Brook with us in the spring," said Spotty the Turtle. "Perhaps he has been hiding there all summer."

"Perhaps he hasn't!" replied Billy Mink

scornfully. "Don't you suppose that with all the traveling I do up and down the Laughing Brook I'd have known of it if he had?"

"Perhaps he was out seeing the Great World like Grandfather Frog," Jerry Muskrat suggested.

"If he was he'll know enough now never to go again," grunted Grandfather Frog. Everybody smiled, for it tickled his friends to hear Grandfather Frog insist that he knew all about the Great World, when they knew that despite all his adventures he really had had no more than a pee pat—a very tiny bit of it. But they couldn't make Grandfather Frog believe this. No, siree! He firmly believed that he had seen the Great World, and that it wasn't to be compared with the dear old Smiling Pool.

"Well, I don't know as it matters much where Paddy the Beaver has been all summer," said Little Joe Otter. "What does matter is the fact

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that he is somewhere up the Laughing Brook this minute, and he says that he is going to make a new pond way back in the Green Forest. I don't see why the Smiling Pool isn't good enough for him, but if he wants to take the trouble to make a new pond I don't know that I have any objections. I wonder if he has begun work yet?"

Jerry Muskrat had been looking very sharply at the bank on which Little Joe was sitting. "I think he has," said Jerry.

"What makes you think so?" asked Billy Mink. "I think myself that he is just a great boaster, and gave us that warning that he was going to stop the water running in the

Laughing Brook just to give us a scare."

Jerry didn't reply. He just pointed to the bank. Everybody looked, and they could hardly believe their eyes when they saw a wet line running all the way along the bank, which showed that the water was not as high as it had been. They just stared and stared, with eyes and mouths wide open, and even while they looked the water dropped ever so little.

"I—I guess he did mean it, after all, and he must be at work right now," said Billy Mink slowly, as if it were hard work to believe what he was saying. "I think it is time we went up to see what is going on."

With that he started up the Laughing Brook, and all the rest followed, that is, all but Grandfather Frog. Spotty the Turtle looked back and saw him still sitting on his green lily-pad. "Aren't you coming?" he called.

"No," replied Grandfather Frog. "I was

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foolish enough to leave the Smiling Pool once, and I'll never do it again no matter what happens."

And so they left him sitting on his big green lily-pad watching the Smiling Pool grow smaller and smaller. It was strangely still there. There was no one for company excepting a few of his great great grandchildren, the Tadpoles. Even the trout had started up the Laughing Brook, as if they felt that something was wrong.

"Chugarum!" said Grandfather Frog. "This is dreadful! I hope that Paddy the Beaver will do as he promised and let the water run again when he has made his pond. If he doesn't I—I—well, I'm going to stay anyway."